

CHAPTER 57—PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION**SUBCHAPTER I—PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION OFFICE****PART A—ORGANIZATION AND PUBLICATIONS**

- Sec.
 2321. Establishment.
 2322. Seal.
 2323. Organization.
 2324. Restrictions on employees as to interest in plant variety protection.
 2325. Repealed.
 2326. Regulations.
 2327. Plant Variety Protection Board.
 2328. Library.
 2329. Register of protected plant varieties.
 2330. Publications.
 2331. Copies for public libraries.

PART B—LEGAL PROVISIONS AS TO THE PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION OFFICE

2351. Day for taking action falling on Saturday, Sunday, or holiday.
 2352. Form of papers filed.
 2353. Testimony in Plant Variety Protection Office cases.
 2354. Subpoenas; witnesses.
 2355. Effect of defective execution.
 2356. Regulations for practice before the Office.
 2357. Unauthorized practice.

PART C—PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION FEES

2371. Plant variety protection fees.
 2372. Payment of plant variety protection fees; return of excess amounts.

SUBCHAPTER II—PROTECTABILITY OF PLANT VARIETIES AND CERTIFICATES OF PROTECTION**PART D—PROTECTABILITY OF PLANT VARIETIES**

2401. Definitions and rules of construction.
 2402. Right to plant variety protection; plant varieties protectable.
 2403. Reciprocity limits.
 2404. Public interest in wide usage.

PART E—APPLICATIONS; FORM; WHO MAY FILE; RELATING BACK; CONFIDENTIALITY

2421. Application for recognition of plant variety rights.
 2422. Content of application.
 2423. Joint breeders.
 2424. Death or incapacity of breeder.
 2425. Benefit of earlier filing date.
 2426. Confidential status of application.
 2427. Publication.

PART F—EXAMINATIONS; RESPONSE TIME; INITIAL APPEALS

2441. Examination of application.
 2442. Notice of refusal; reconsideration.
 2443. Initial appeal.

PART G—APPEALS TO COURTS AND OTHER REVIEW

2461. Appeals.
 2462. Civil action against Secretary.
 2463. Repealed.

PART H—CERTIFICATES OF PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION

2481. Plant variety protection.
 2482. How issued.
 2483. Contents and term of plant variety protection.
 2484. Correction of Plant Variety Protection Office mistake.
 2485. Correction of applicant's mistake.
 2486. Correction of named breeder.

Sec.

PART I—REEXAMINATION AFTER ISSUE, AND CONTESTED PROCEEDINGS

2501. Reexamination after issue.
 2502, 2503. Repealed.
 2504. Interfering plant variety protection.

SUBCHAPTER III—PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION AND RIGHTS**PART J—OWNERSHIP AND ASSIGNMENT**

2531. Ownership and assignment.
 2532. Ownership during testing.

PART K—INFRINGEMENT OF PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION

2541. Infringement of plant variety protection.
 2542. Grandfather clause.
 2543. Right to save seed; crop exemption.
 2544. Research exemption.
 2545. Intermediary exemption.

PART L—REMEDIES FOR INFRINGEMENT OF PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION, AND OTHER ACTIONS

2561. Remedy for infringement of plant variety protection.
 2562. Presumption of validity; defenses.
 2563. Injunction.
 2564. Damages.
 2565. Attorney fees.
 2566. Time limitation on damages.
 2567. Limitation of damages; marking and notice.
 2568. False marking; cease and desist orders.
 2569. Nonresident proprietors; service and notice.
 2570. Liability of States, instrumentalities of States, and State officials for infringement of plant variety protection.

PART M—INTENT AND SEVERABILITY

2581. Intent.
 2582. Severability.
 2583. Repealed.

SUBCHAPTER I—PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION OFFICE**PART A—ORGANIZATION AND PUBLICATIONS****§ 2321. Establishment**

There is hereby established in the Department of Agriculture an office to be known as the Plant Variety Protection Office, which shall have the functions set forth in this chapter.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, §1, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1542; Pub. L. 96-574, §1, Dec. 22, 1980, 94 Stat. 3350.)

AMENDMENTS

1980—Pub. L. 96-574 substituted “an office” for “a bureau”.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 91-577, title III, §141, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1558, provided that: “This Act [this chapter] shall take effect upon enactment [Dec. 24, 1970]. Applications may be filed with the Secretary and held by him until the Office of Plant Variety Protection is organized and in operation”.

SHORT TITLE OF 1994 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 103-349, §1(a), Oct. 6, 1994, 108 Stat. 3136, provided that: “This Act [amending sections 2327, 2330, 2353, 2354, 2357, 2401, 2402, 2404, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2442, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2482, 2483, 2486, 2501, 2504, 2532, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2561, 2566, 2567, 2568, and 2570 of this title, repealing sections 2463, 2502 and 2503 of this title, and enacting

provisions set out as notes under section 2401 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Plant Variety Protection Act Amendments of 1994.’”

SHORT TITLE OF 1992 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 102-560, §1, Oct. 28, 1992, 106 Stat. 4230, provided that: “This Act [enacting section 2570 of this title and section 296 of Title 35, Patents, amending section 2541 of this title and section 271 of Title 35, and enacting provisions set out as a note under section 2541 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Patent and Plant Variety Protection Remedy Clarification Act’.”

SHORT TITLE

Pub. L. 91-577, title III, §145, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1559, provided that: “This Act [enacting this chapter, section 1611 of this title, and sections 1545 and 2353 of Title 28, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure, amending section 1562 of this title and sections 1338 and 1498 of Title 28, and enacting provisions set out as notes under this section] may be cited as the ‘Plant Variety Protection Act’.”

§ 2322. Seal

The Plant Variety Protection Office shall have a seal with which documents and certificates evidencing plant variety protection shall be authenticated.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, §2, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1542.)

§ 2323. Organization

The organization of the Plant Variety Protection Office shall, except as provided herein, be determined by the Secretary of Agriculture (hereinafter called the Secretary). The office shall devote itself substantially exclusively to the administration of this chapter.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, §3, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1542.)

§ 2324. Restrictions on employees as to interest in plant variety protection

Employees of the Plant Variety Protection Office shall be ineligible during the periods of their employment, to apply for plant variety protection and to acquire directly or indirectly, except by inheritance or bequest, any right or interest in any matters before that office. This section shall not apply to members of the Plant Variety Protection Board who are not otherwise employees of the Plant Variety Protection Office.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, §4, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1542.)

§ 2325. Repealed. Pub. L. 96-574, §2, Dec. 22, 1980, 94 Stat. 3350

Section, Pub. L. 91-577, title I, §5, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1542, required employees designated by Secretary to give bond before entering upon their duties.

§ 2326. Regulations

The Secretary may establish regulations, not inconsistent with law, for the conduct of proceedings in the Plant Variety Protection Office after consultations with the Plant Variety Protection Board.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, §6, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1542.)

§ 2327. Plant Variety Protection Board

(a) Appointment

The Secretary shall appoint a Plant Variety Protection Board. The Board shall consist of individuals who are experts in various areas of varietal development covered by this chapter. Membership of the Board shall include farmer representation and shall be drawn approximately equally from the private or seed industry sector and from the sector of government or the public. The Secretary or the designee of the Secretary shall act as chairperson of the Board without voting rights except in the case of ties.

(b) Functions of Board

The functions of the Plant Variety Protection Board shall include:

(1) Advising the Secretary concerning the adoption of Rules and Regulations to facilitate the proper administration of this chapter;

(2) Making advisory decisions on all appeals from the examiner. The Board shall determine whether to act as a full Board or by panels it selects; and whether to review advisory decisions made by a panel. For service on such appeals, the Board may select, as temporary members, experts in the area to which the particular appeal relates; and

(3) Advising the Secretary on all questions under section 2404 of this title.

(c) Compensation of Board

The members of the Plant Variety Protection Board shall serve without compensation except for standard government reimbursable expenses.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, §7, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1543; Pub. L. 103-349, §13(a), Oct. 6, 1994, 108 Stat. 3142.)

AMENDMENTS

1994—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 103-349 substituted “the designee of the Secretary shall act as chairperson” for “his designee shall act as chairman” in last sentence.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1994 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 103-349 effective 180 days after Oct. 6, 1994, see section 15 of Pub. L. 103-349, set out as a note under section 2401 of this title.

§ 2328. Library

The Secretary shall maintain a library of scientific and other works and periodicals, both foreign and domestic, in the Plant Variety Protection Office to aid the examiners in the discharge of their duties.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, §8, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1543; Pub. L. 96-574, §3, Dec. 22, 1980, 94 Stat. 3350.)

AMENDMENTS

1980—Pub. L. 96-574 substituted “examiners” for “officers”.

§ 2329. Register of protected plant varieties

The Secretary shall maintain a register of descriptions of United States protected plant varieties.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, §9, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1543; Pub. L. 96-574, §4, Dec. 22, 1980, 94 Stat. 3350.)

AMENDMENTS

1980—Pub. L. 96-574 substituted “descriptions” for “published specifications”, and struck out provisions requiring maintenance of a file for other information.

§ 2330. Publications

(a) The Secretary may publish, or cause to be published, in such format as the Secretary shall determine to be suitable, the following:

- (1) The descriptions of plant varieties protected including drawings and photographs.
- (2) The Official Journal of the Plant Variety Protection Office, including annual indices.
- (3) Pamphlet copies of the plant variety protection laws and rules of practice and circulars or other publications relating to the business of the Office.

(b) The Secretary may (1) establish public facilities for the searching of plant variety protection records and materials, and (2) from time to time, as through an information service, disseminate to the public those portions of the technological and other public information available to or within the Plant Variety Protection Office to encourage innovation and promote the progress of plant breeding.

(c) The Secretary may exchange any of the publications specified for publications desirable for the use of the Plant Variety Protection Office. The Secretary may exchange copies of descriptions, drawings, and photographs of United States protected plant varieties for copies of descriptions, drawings, and photographs of applications and protected plant varieties of foreign countries.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, § 10, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1543; Pub. L. 96-574, §§ 5-8, Dec. 22, 1980, 94 Stat. 3350; Pub. L. 103-349, § 13(b), Oct. 6, 1994, 108 Stat. 3143.)

AMENDMENTS

1994—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 103-349 substituted “the Secretary” for “he” before “shall” in introductory provisions.

1980—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 96-574, § 5, substituted provisions respecting descriptions for provisions respecting specifications.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 96-574, §§ 6, 7, struck out subsec. (b) which related to photolithography and lithography, redesignated subsec. (c) as (b) and substituted “plant breeding” for “the useful arts”.

Subsecs. (c), (d). Pub. L. 96-574, §§ 7, 8, redesignated subsec. (d) as (c) and substituted “descriptions” for “specifications” in two places. Former subsec. (c) redesignated (b).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1994 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 103-349 effective 180 days after Oct. 6, 1994, see section 15 of Pub. L. 103-349, set out as a note under section 2401 of this title.

§ 2331. Copies for public libraries

The Secretary may supply printed copies of descriptions, drawings, and photographs of protected plant varieties to public libraries in the United States which shall maintain such copies for the use of the public.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, § 11, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1544; Pub. L. 96-574, § 9, Dec. 22, 1980, 94 Stat. 3350.)

AMENDMENTS

1980—Pub. L. 96-574 substituted “descriptions” for “specifications”.

PART B—LEGAL PROVISIONS AS TO THE PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION OFFICE

§ 2351. Day for taking action falling on Saturday, Sunday, or holiday

When the day, or the last day, for taking any action or paying any fee in the United States Plant Variety Protection Office falls on Saturday, Sunday, a holiday within the District of Columbia, or on any other day the Plant Variety Protection Office is closed for the receipt of papers, the action may be taken or the fee paid, on the next succeeding business day.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, § 21, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1544.)

§ 2352. Form of papers filed

The Secretary may by regulations prescribe the form of papers to be filed in the Plant Variety Protection Office.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, § 22, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1544.)

§ 2353. Testimony in Plant Variety Protection Office cases

The Secretary may establish regulations for taking affidavits, depositions, and other evidence required in cases before the Plant Variety Protection Office. Any officer authorized by law to take depositions to be used in the courts of the United States, or of the State where the officer resides, may take such affidavits and depositions, and swear the witnesses. If any person acts as a hearing officer by authority of the Secretary, the person shall have like power.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, § 23, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1544; Pub. L. 103-349, § 13(c), Oct. 6, 1994, 108 Stat. 3143.)

AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-349 substituted “the officer” for “he” in second sentence and “the person” for “he” in third sentence.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1994 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 103-349 effective 180 days after Oct. 6, 1994, see section 15 of Pub. L. 103-349, set out as a note under section 2401 of this title.

§ 2354. Subpoenas; witnesses

(a) The clerk of any United States court for the district wherein testimony is to be taken in accordance with regulations established by the Secretary for use in any contested case in the Plant Variety Protection Office shall, upon the application of any party thereof, issue a subpoena for any witness residing or being within such district or within one hundred miles of the stated place in such district, commanding the witness to appear and testify before an officer in such district authorized to take depositions and affidavits, at the time and place stated in the subpoena. The provisions of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure relating to the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents and things shall apply to contested cases in the Plant Variety Protection Office insofar as consistent with such regulations.

(b) Every witness subpoenaed or testifying shall be allowed the fees and traveling expenses

allowed to witnesses attending the United States district courts.

(c) A judge of a court whose clerk issued a subpoena may enforce obedience to the process or punish disobedience as in other like cases, on proof that a witness, served with such subpoena, neglected or refused to appear or to testify. No witness shall be deemed guilty of contempt for disobeying such subpoena unless the fees and traveling expenses of the witness in going to, and returning from, one day's attendance at the place of examination, are paid or tendered the witness at the time of the service of the subpoena; nor for refusing to disclose any secret matter except upon appropriate order of the court which issued the subpoena or of the Secretary.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, § 24, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1544; Pub. L. 103-349, § 13(d), Oct. 6, 1994, 108 Stat. 3143.)

AMENDMENTS

1994—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 103-349, § 13(d)(1), substituted “the witness” for “him” in first sentence.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 103-349, § 13(d)(2)(B), substituted “the witness” for “him” after “paid or tendered” in second sentence.

Pub. L. 103-349, § 13(d)(2)(A), which directed that second sentence be amended by substituting “the fees and traveling expenses of the witness” for “this fees and traveling expenses”, was executed by making the substitution for “his fees and traveling expenses”, to reflect the probable intent of Congress.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1994 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 103-349 effective 180 days after Oct. 6, 1994, see section 15 of Pub. L. 103-349, set out as a note under section 2401 of this title.

§ 2355. Effect of defective execution

Any document to be filed in the Plant Variety Protection Office and which is required by any law or regulation to be executed in a specified manner may be provisionally accepted by the Secretary despite a defective execution, provided a properly executed document is submitted within such time as may be prescribed.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, § 25, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1545.)

§ 2356. Regulations for practice before the Office

The Secretary shall prescribe regulations governing the admission to practice and conduct of persons representing applicants or other parties before the Plant Variety Protection Office. The Secretary may, after notice and opportunity for a hearing, suspend or exclude, either generally or in any particular case, from further practice before the Office of Plant Variety Protection any person shown to be incompetent or disreputable or guilty of gross misconduct.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, § 26, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1545.)

§ 2357. Unauthorized practice

Anyone who in the United States engages in direct or indirect practice before the Office of Plant Variety Protection while suspended or excluded under section 2356 of this title, or without being admitted to practice before the Office,

shall be liable in a civil action for the return of all money received, and for compensation for damage done by such person and also may be enjoined from such practice. However, there shall be no liability for damage if such person establishes that the work was done competently and without negligence. This section does not apply to anyone who, without a claim of self-sufficiency, works under the supervision of another who stands admitted and is the responsible party; or to anyone who establishes that the person acted only on behalf of any employer by whom the person was regularly employed.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, § 27, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1545; Pub. L. 103-349, § 13(e), Oct. 6, 1994, 108 Stat. 3143.)

AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-349 substituted “the person” for “he” in two places in last sentence.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1994 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 103-349 effective 180 days after Oct. 6, 1994, see section 15 of Pub. L. 103-349, set out as a note under section 2401 of this title.

PART C—PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION FEES

§ 2371. Plant variety protection fees

(a) In general

The Secretary shall, under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, charge and collect reasonable fees for services performed under this chapter.

(b) Late payment penalty

On failure to pay such fees, the Secretary shall assess a late payment penalty. Such overdue fees shall accrue interest as required by section 3717 of title 31.

(c) Disposition of funds

Such fees, late payment penalties, and accrued interest collected shall be credited to the account that incurs the cost and shall remain available without fiscal year limitation to pay the expenses incurred by the Secretary in carrying out this chapter. Such funds collected (including late payment penalties and any interest earned) may be invested by the Secretary in insured or fully collateralized, interest-bearing accounts or, at the discretion of the Secretary, by the Secretary of the Treasury in United States Government debt instruments.

(d) Actions for nonpayment

The Attorney General may bring an action for the recovery of charges that have not been paid in accordance with this chapter against any person obligated for payment of such charges under this chapter in any United States district court or other United States court for any territory or possession in any jurisdiction in which the person is found, resides, or transacts business. The court shall have jurisdiction to hear and decide the action.

(e) Authorization of appropriations

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this chapter.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, § 31, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1545; Pub. L. 96-574, § 10, Dec. 22, 1980, 94 Stat.

3350; Pub. L. 100-203, title I, §1505, Dec. 22, 1987, 101 Stat. 1330-28.)

AMENDMENTS

1987—Pub. L. 100-203 amended section generally. Prior to amendment, section read as follows: “The Secretary shall, under such regulations as he may prescribe, charge and collect reasonable fees for services performed under this chapter. Such fees shall be deposited into the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts. There are hereby authorized to be appropriated such funds as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this chapter.”

1980—Pub. L. 96-574 substituted provisions relating to deposit of fees and authorization of appropriations for provisions relating to recovering of fees, initial capital of the fund, and charging of fees.

§ 2372. Payment of plant variety protection fees; return of excess amounts

All fees shall be paid to the Secretary, and the Secretary may refund any sum paid by mistake or in excess of the fee required.

(Pub. L. 91-577, title I, §32, Dec. 24, 1970, 84 Stat. 1545.)

SUBCHAPTER II—PROTECTABILITY OF PLANT VARIETIES AND CERTIFICATES OF PROTECTION

PART D—PROTECTABILITY OF PLANT VARIETIES

§ 2401. Definitions and rules of construction

(a) Definitions

As used in this chapter:

(1) Basic seed

The term “basic seed” means the seed planted to produce certified or commercial seed.

(2) Breeder

The term “breeder” means the person who directs the final breeding creating a variety or who discovers and develops a variety. If the actions are conducted by an agent on behalf of a principal, the principal, rather than the agent, shall be considered the breeder. The term does not include a person who redevelops or rediscovers a variety the existence of which is publicly known or a matter of common knowledge.

(3) Essentially derived variety

(A) In general

The term “essentially derived variety” means a variety that—

(i) is predominantly derived from another variety (referred to in this paragraph as the “initial variety”) or from a variety that is predominantly derived from the initial variety, while retaining the expression of the essential characteristics that result from the genotype or combination of genotypes of the initial variety;

(ii) is clearly distinguishable from the initial variety; and

(iii) except for differences that result from the act of derivation, conforms to the initial variety in the expression of the essential characteristics that result from the genotype or combination of genotypes of the initial variety.

(B) Methods

An essentially derived variety may be obtained by the selection of a natural or induced mutant or of a somaclonal variant, the selection of a variant individual from plants of the initial variety, backcrossing, transformation by genetic engineering, or other method.

(4) Kind

The term “kind” means one or more related species or subspecies singly or collectively known by one common name, such as soybean, flax, or radish.

(5) Seed

The term “seed”, with respect to a tuber propagated variety, means the tuber or the part of the tuber used for propagation.

(6) Sexually reproduced

The term “sexually reproduced” includes any production of a variety by seed, but does not include the production of a variety by tuber propagation.

(7) Tuber propagated

The term “tuber propagated” means propagated by a tuber or a part of a tuber.

(8) United States

The terms “United States” and “this country” mean the United States, the territories and possessions of the United States, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(9) Variety

The term “variety” means a plant grouping within a single botanical taxon of the lowest known rank, that, without regard to whether the conditions for plant variety protection are fully met, can be defined by the expression of the characteristics resulting from a given genotype or combination of genotypes, distinguished from any other plant grouping by the expression of at least one characteristic and considered as a unit with regard to the suitability of the plant grouping for being propagated unchanged. A variety may be represented by seed, transplants, plants, tubers, tissue culture plantlets, and other matter.

(b) Rules of construction

For the purposes of this chapter:

(1) Sale or disposition for nonreproductive purposes

The sale or disposition, for other than reproductive purposes, of harvested material produced as a result of experimentation or testing of a variety to ascertain the characteristics of the variety, or as a by-product of increasing a variety, shall not be considered to be a sale or disposition for purposes of exploitation of the variety.

(2) Sale or disposition for reproductive purposes

The sale or disposition of a variety for reproductive purposes shall not be considered to be a sale or disposition for the purposes of exploitation of the variety if the sale or disposition is done as an integral part of a program of experimentation or testing to ascertain the